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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND IRAN;
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1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Key international stories today include the political implications of Argentine President Nstor Kirchner's address to the UNGA, in which he urged the UN to persuade Iran to cooperate with a judicial probe into the 1994 bombing of the AMIA in Buenos Aires; and similarities between US President George W. Bush and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Lastly, tough and unmistakable words appear"

Joaquin Morales Sol, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," opines (09/26) "(Argentina's) confrontation with Iran has two dimensions - a judicial and a political one. By using tough and unmistakable words, Nstor Kirchner sided with the Argentine judiciary against the Iranian ayatollah regime..."

"For the first time on the major world political stage, the Argentine President asked the insane Ahmadinejad administration to deliver the former Iranian government officials that have been summoned by Argentine judges in the AMIA bombing investigation..."

"... Kirchner's unresolved conflict is that there is also a political dimension to the Argentine-Iranian dispute. Every Argentine Government, from Menem to Kirchner, received information from local and foreign intelligence services that Iranian government officials took part in the attack against the AMIA. Did they do it on their own or did they execute a criminal act that had been masterminded by the Tehran government? The question, which has never been answered, is particularly important. It is the difference between regular criminals and a criminal State. If the latter was the case, the attack against the AMIA would have been an attack from a foreign government against Argentina."

"Some in Argentina believe that putting pressure on Iran now is the same as supporting Bush. Those are the ones who always wonder where Washington is in order to position themselves on the other side. To define this dilemma, one reflection is enough - the Iranian nuclear program is highly dangerous for world peace, but it is the international community which should put the eccentric Iranian president at bay. Nothing like the war in Iraq should be allowed again because it disregarded international control procedures and ended up in the current disaster."

"... However, the time has come for Kirchner to put an end to the cautious circumlocutions he used to speak about the Ahmadinejad administration."

"After all, a president who denies the Holocaust and threatens the world with nuclear weapons does not deserve such thoughtful

treatment."

- "Kirchner's unusual toughness against Iran distances him from his allies"

Ignacio Zuleta, on special assignment in New York for business-financial "Ambito Financiero," writes (09/26) "With an unusually tough address..., Argentina has put an end to its support for the axis of evil... In the framework of the UN General Assembly, Nstor Kirchner denounced the Iranian government for not cooperating with the AMIA judicial probe... He also urged the UN to intercede with Iran to allow the judicial request to go forward..."

"... Kirchner's strong, calculated and somewhat risky message was surprising because his position against Iran is a risky one both for the country and for himself... As time goes by, his decision will pass into history as one of the most important decisions made by an outgoing government. The victims of both attacks have truly earned this as well as the country, which has been exposed too often to dismissive attitudes from government officials on serious topics."

- "Revolutionary leaders"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarn," opines (09/26) " US rage against the Iranian president hides... the real focus of the discussion. At least on the surface, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is in line with some orthodox practice which the US should already be used to. He is a conservative (neo-conservative?) political leader with some tenacious and sometimes absurd religious mystique that is harassed by a domestic moderate movement from which he can only escape by emphasizing a clash with a threatening enemy. This is a game that his archenemy, W. Bush, knows very well and has also played with some luck. Yesterday Bush preferred to use Fidel to practice his rhetoric. However, the central issue is not their shared features. These kinds of leaders imply involution."

"Ahmadinejad is on the verge of defending Hitler and fascism... He is not a revolutionary leader but part of the worst part of a system in which change means failure for both extremes of the world. The serious thing is that he is not the only one - on this current stage the dances are quite similar, the only difference is rhythm. This is the worst thing of all."

- "If the US does not invade Iran within 24 hours..."

Left-of-center "Pgina 12" carries an opinion piece by writer Ernesto Seman, who writes (09/26) "If the US does not bomb Iran within 24 hours, Nstor Kirchner will be able to continue with the rest of his agenda in peace, knowing that his accusation yesterday was not the centerpiece of someone else's mission. In fact, Kirchner's claims were just side claims in the flow of claims, threats and demands that Ahmadinejad received in New York..."

"Kirchner's remarks on Iran supported the warning made by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who said that the Iranian nuclear program poses 'an unacceptable risk to the world and the region,' and German FM Angela Merkel's claim that Iran 'should show the world that it does not have nuclear weapons.' Lula let Brazil... continue its smooth relationship with the Middle East by not mentioning Iran, something remarkable for those who believe that a common security policy should be a priority for Mercosur."

"Ahmadinejad, who spoke right after Kirchner, disregarded the Argentine claim and about the rest he said he believed that the nuclear issue is 'a closed issue.'"

"... The US president included Iran in a much broader group of 'brutal regimes' along with Bielo-Russia, Cuba, North Korea, Syria and Zimbabwe... It's something like a Hexagon of Evil, which replaces the former Axis of Evil, not so much because the Evil has spread around the world but because the broad size of the target is inverse to the efficiency in solving the problem..."

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